

Success Stories

The Newsletter Devoted to Building on Success &
Focusing on the Opportunities Ahead

Volume 8

Wednesday, November 2

Priceless

Tobacco Free Events in Spokane

Secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure is harmful in more ways than one. We know that secondhand smoke causes many health problems – in fact, 38,000 people die from secondhand smoke exposure every year in the US. SHS exposure is especially dangerous for children, but not just because of its negative effects on health. There is an aspect of SHS exposure that is just as harmful as the smoke itself: modeling of the behavior. Children that are exposed to SHS not only suffer higher instances of asthma, SIDS, cavities, upper respiratory infections, and other illnesses than kids who aren't exposed, but seeing an adult smoke also increases their chances of trying a cigarette themselves.

Building on Past Successes

Spokane Regional Health District's (SRHD) Tobacco Prevention and Control Program has had two major successes in the fight to reduce exposure to SHS. In 2002, SRHD worked with the Spokane City Council to establish Tobacco-Free Zones in City parks at areas frequented by children. In 2004, SRHD entered into its first sponsorship with Hoopfest, the region's largest 3-on-3 basketball tournament, to be a completely Tobacco-Free Event in Riverfront Park. Hoopfest 2005 was also a Tobacco-Free Event. Building on the momentum of these successes, SRHD has embarked on a new campaign to have even more major events and venues be tobacco-free in Spokane County.



New Ventures

In order to create more tobacco-free events and venues in Spokane County, SRHD has entered into sponsorship relationships with several major events in 2005. In order to receive a sponsorship, the event must be designated as Tobacco-Free, and they agree to not take any money from tobacco companies or their subsidiaries. For the first year ever, Bloomsday 2005 was a tobacco-free event. Bloomsday, a 12K road race throughout scenic Spokane, draws over 50,000 participants and just as many spectators. We were able to distribute educational fliers in registration packets, hand out water bottles and t-shirts with our "stompin' out the butts" message at the trade show, as well as hang up several large banners and posters around the city indicating that Bloomsday was a tobacco-free event for both participants and spectators.

Also in 2005, SRHD was able to enter into a large sponsorship agreement with Clear Channel Radio so that three of their major events were designated as Tobacco-Free: the Kid's Golf Classic, Neighbor Day, and Kid's Day. Neighbor Day, the 4th of July celebration in Riverfront Park, has over 35,000 people in attendance, and Kid's Day in Riverfront Park has over 10,000 children and parents in attendance. For all three events, we received over 1,500 radio promos advertising the event as Tobacco-Free, and 1,200 exclusive SRHD promotional radio spots. In addition, we were interviewed on-air about the dangers of SHS and the tobacco-free nature of each event. Banners and "Tobacco Free Event" signs were posted throughout Riverfront park for each event, and a link to our website with the "Tobacco Free Event" tagline were on each website of the 6 Clear Channel radio stations in Spokane. T-shirts for each of the events also had "Tobacco Free Event" beneath the logo. Finally, we have entered into a sponsorship with First Night Spokane 2006 to have all signage, advertisements, websites and event guides have the tagline "In partnership with Spokane Regional Health District, this venue is alcohol, tobacco, and drug free." First Night Spokane is held across Downtown Spokane, and reaches over 25,000 people each year.



Challenges

The biggest challenge with event sponsorships is sustainability. While counter-marketing is a best practice in tobacco control, the funding is never guaranteed. We are lucky that Clear Channel has agreed to maintain their three major events as tobacco-free, and to not accept money from tobacco companies, regardless of our sponsorship. We hope that by establishing good relationships with these many organizations, they will change their business practices and have tobacco free events be the rule not the exception.

In this issue

Major events in Spokane go
Tobacco-Free!